



# News Release

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## **Harborview Medical Center ready to accept Ebola patients**

*Public health and health care systems prepare for possible Ebola evacuees*

**SEATTLE** — Harborview Medical Center has volunteered to become one of the hospitals willing to consider receiving U.S. patients evacuated from Western Africa for treatment of Ebola. The decision follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s request last week to find hospitals around the country that could treat citizens who have been on the frontlines of the international crisis.

“Consistent with Harborview Medical Center’s mission and role of serving the public in Seattle, King County and our region, we’re willing to consider accepting U.S. residents who may be infected with Ebola,” said Dr. Timothy Dellit, associate medical director of the Seattle hospital. “It will depend on the hospital’s current capacity and our ability to maintain our critical functions.”

There are no patients with Ebola in Washington, and there are no plans to evacuate patients to the region in the near future. However, the hospital and state and local health officials are ready.

“Harborview and other Washington hospitals have precautions in place to ensure the safety of health care providers and other patients if someone with Ebola is brought in for treatment,” said Dr. Scott Lindquist, communicable disease epidemiologist for the state department of health. “The public wouldn’t be in danger.”

The disease is spread through direct contact with blood, body fluids, or excretions from an infected person. The lack of infection-control measures and medical supplies in Western Africa has been the key factor in allowing the virus to reach epidemic proportions. Health officials note the dramatically different conditions between the health care systems and infrastructure in the United States and West Africa.

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The Department of Health and local health agencies have sent hospitals and health care providers information on infection control and screening to help them quickly identify symptoms and prevent the spread of the virus.

"We may or may not see a case of Ebola locally," said Dr. Jeff Duchin, chief communicable disease epidemiologist for Public Health-Seattle and King County. "Even if a traveler with Ebola did come to Seattle, the risk of that person causing an outbreak is almost zero. However, our health care and public health systems are preparing to promptly recognize and safely evaluate people who may be infected with Ebola."

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